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SUBJECT: SE GRATION VISIT TO EL FASHER AND EL GENEINA,
DARFUR, NOVEMBER 20-21, 2009

Classified By: CDA Robert Whitehead, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) Summary: During the November 20-21 visit to Darfur of U.S. Special Envoy (SE) General Scott Gration, senior officials from the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) estimated that 40 percent of the problems in Darfur are related to the troubled relationship between Chad and Sudan. Monitoring the Chad-Sudan border would require a change in the mandates of UNAMID and MINURCAT. The Government of Sudan (GOS) has solidified its control over Darfur, but scattered fighting continues between Darfuri rebel groups and the GOS in outlying regions. In El Geneina, UNAMID officials and humanitarian representatives bemoaned high insecurity and the inability of the GOS to prevent kidnappings in West Darfur. End summary.

EL FASHER: UNAMID STRATEGY SESSIONS

12. (SBU) In a private meeting with SE Gration and CDA Whitehead, UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative (DJSR) Mohamed Yonis noted overall mission concern for two UNAMID staff kidnapped 85 days earlier from Zalingei, West Darfur. He was concerned that, as UNAMID forces expanded, they were increasingly in competition with local populations for scarce water resources. Emphasizing that the Chad-Sudan dynamic affects Darfur and UNAMID's success there, Yonis urged the United States and France to push the warring neighbors to direct talks. Yonis said that the report of the African Union High Level Commission on Darfur (spearheaded by Thabo Mbeki) deserved careful examination. SE Gration replied that hybrid courts were complicated, costly and not always effective, citing Rwanda as an example and added that he did not know if it would be possible to duplicate a Rwanda-like gacaca mechanism internally within Darfur. On UNAMID's role, Yonis cited UNAMID's success in bringing peace and security, but SE Gration cautioned that the mission needs to pursue actively policing and border monitoring, and not be afraid to resort to their mandate's Chapter 7 right for access and to impose order within the entire mission area.

13. (SBU) At a Darfur strategy session, UNAMID Section Chiefs, including DJSR Yonis and Force Commander (FC) General Patrick Nyamvumba (Rwanda), briefed SE Gration on the security and political situations across the three states of Darfur. North Darfur has seen regular clashes between the Sudanese Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction (SLA/AW) and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) since September. In South Darfur, collateral tribal clashes continue following the February 2009 fighting near Muhajeriya, but overall, the GOS has solidified its control over the state. Scattered tribal and factional

clashes have occurred in West Darfur recently, and three international NGO workers are currently being held by unknown kidnappers in West Darfur. Yonis noted that insecurity had complicated the issue of voluntary return of IDPs, and added that strong opinions in the humanitarian community further muddled the waters. Different assessments done on the same areas had come to different conclusions on whether many returns were seasonal or permanent.

14. (SBU) Difficult relations between Chad and Sudan continue to stymie UNAMID's work in bringing security to Darfur, according to FC Nyamvumba. He estimated that 40 percent of the "Darfur problem" is related directly to the confrontational dynamic between the two neighbors. "A political solution will relieve us from the impact that these relations have on Darfur," he added. FC Nyamvumba counseled that a successful two-pronged approach would require immediate disbanding and disarmament of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and Chadian Armed Opposition Groups (CAOGs), and international monitoring from both sides of the border. Moudjib Djinadou, head of the UNAMID Joint Mission Analysis Center (JMAC), reported that CAOGs have retreated from the border into isolated areas of North Darfur (near Mau) once controlled by SLA/AW, but a small faction remains positioned near the border in Foro Burunga, West Darfur. JMAC has no information that indicates that either JEM or the CAOGs have been disarmed by their respective supporters in N'Djamena or Khartoum.

15. (SBU) SE Gration queried if UNAMID Formed Police Units (FPUs) and peacekeepers could establish a security buffer outside the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps to permit residents to emerge and resume traditional agricultural

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practices. UNAMID FPU Deputy Commander Adeyemi Ogunjemilusi advised that the FPUs currently patrol around IDP camps, but given that most camps are built on contested land, UNAMID encouragement of such agricultural activities would ignite local conflicts on property already farmed by nearby villagers. Ogunjemilusi also added that UNAMID FPUs could not begin joint patrols with GOS police, as that would violate the UN's perceived neutrality in a region where the police are frequently involved in human rights violations. (Note: The most significant confrontation between IDPs and GOS police occurred on August 25 at Kalma IDP camp in South Darfur, when Central Reserve Police officers opened fire on an IDP protest, killing 35 IDPs. GOS authorities have not prosecuted any officers in connection with the killings. End note.)

16. (SBU) SE Gration suggested the establishment of a Darfur policing force that recruits officers from the IDP camps, and provides security in camps where GOS police cannot enter without causing significant unrest. DJSR Yonis and FPU Commander Adeyemi noted that this idea would solve the problem that UNAMID faces in being solely responsible for security in some camps. DJSR Yonis said UNAMID could explore how it would interact and assist with the composition of such a force. However, they noted that the GOS Ministry of the Interior would need to approve such a concept. The Ministry not only oversees the regular uniformed police, but also controls the Central Reserve Police, which act as its own security force.

EL GENEINA: CHALLENGES AND KIDNAPPINGS

17. (C) In El Geneina, West Darfur, UNAMID Sector West Commander General Balla Keita (Senegal) briefed SE Gration on the challenges his mission faces in West Darfur. Currently operating with only 3.5 active peacekeeping battalions instead of the mandated six, his forces can attend only to the most pressing gaps in security, and cannot cover all sector areas on the ground. Gen. Keita added that the GOS's

inability to provide proper security in West Darfur compounds UNAMID's limitations because UNAMID has been unable to bring qualified staff from UNMIS and the other states of Darfur to El Geneina. Each peacekeeping company team site only conducts one overnight patrol per month because of the limited numbers of peacekeepers available, and the lack of water available restricts long-range patrols in some areas. Gen. Keita also noted that the SAF has increased its presence in West Darfur, which has corresponded to an increase in the presence of small arms in Sector West. He confided to SE that another major challenge is the quality, mind-set and training of his troops. Keita said that MI-35 attack helicopters sought by UNAMID could be of use if a contingent came under attack but would actually be most useful as a means of reinforcing outposts rapidly.

18. (SBU) At a formal briefing for SE Gration in Sector West HQ in El Geneina on November 21, UNAMID officials agreed that the use of UN forces to monitor the Chad-Sudan border was vital, but could only occur if the UN Security Council revised the mandates of both UNAMID and the UN Mission to the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) to perform such tasks. Gen. Keita advised that the solution is for both missions to form a joint operations center in El Geneina; currently, there is only a three-person UNAMID liaison team based in MINURCAT HQ in Abeche, Chad, but that liaison team reports directly to El Fasher and has no direct communications with the El Geneina Sector West HQ. Musse Id, the acting head of office of West Darfur, pointed out that responsibility for arranging such interaction lies in the UN Security Council. "Now we feel like we have nothing to do with each other, despite that we deal with the same problem," Id said. "There is no overarching strategy to permit a cross-border relationship and achieve cross-border objectives."

19. (C) At the same meeting, directors of UN humanitarian agencies uniformly voiced their fear of armed kidnappers in West Darfur, which threatened to undermine humanitarian coverage. Renault Wanrooji, head of the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), West Darfur, whose vehicle was seized by armed gunmen during a failed kidnapping attempt two weeks earlier inside El Geneina said, "We are already talking about the red line." Sally Hydock,

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head of office for the World Food Program (WFP) in El Geneina, noted that security has increased for IDPs in West Darfur, but paradoxically, international humanitarian workers have had to retreat from their operations due to the insecurity. Assorted humanitarian representatives all agreed that the GOS is showing "no real commitment" to improving safety and security. Representatives from UNICEF, WFP and OCHA all confirmed that in recent months, local GOS police and security forces had warned them to stay in their compounds due to the presence of armed gunmen in the vicinity seeking to kidnap them. Gen. Keita echoed the sentiments of the humanitarians by adding, "The government thinks humanitarians are too close to the IDPs. The government would be very happy not having them around in Darfur. They will always try to control the humanitarian workers through fear."

110. (SBU) Comment: UNAMID senior leadership remains highly supportive of USSS initiatives in Darfur. DJSR Yonis and Gens. Nyamvumba and Keita spoke frankly about the limitations and challenges of their operations in Darfur, and expressed gratitude that SE Gration will continue supporting the hybrid mission in Darfur. UNAMID, especially the Sector West force in El Geneina, has improved greatly in coverage and efficiency over the last year, and has the operational willingness to begin monitoring the Chad-Sudan border. End comment.
WHITEHEAD